

## *Laboratory Equipment Release Procedure*

Revision No.: 02    Date: 3/4/2021

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### **1.0 Summary:**

Because of potential radiological, biological or chemical contamination, all equipment used in laboratories that are submitted for servicing, recycling or to be released for unrestricted use must be safely and properly decontaminated and be tagged with a Laboratory Equipment Release Certification Form.

### **2.0 Policy Statement:**

The University at Buffalo will make every effort to safely and properly prepare laboratory equipment which may be potentially contaminated by hazardous chemicals, radiological, or biological materials, for service or repair by University Facilities Operations or by commercial service vendors. Adherence to these procedures is necessary to ensure that exposure to potentially dangerous materials does not occur, and that no materials are inappropriately released to the environment.

### **3.0 Applicability:**

This procedure applies to all equipment located within any laboratory where hazardous chemical, radiological or biologically hazardous materials are used, created, or stored. This may include, but is not limited to, fume hoods, autoclaves, centrifuges, refrigerators, freezers, and incubators (hereafter equipment).

This procedure applies to equipment located within all University at Buffalo campus facilities.

### **4.0 Definitions:**

#### **Employees**

University Facilities staff, all faculty, staff & students

#### **Equipment**

Any laboratory equipment used for research or storage of research materials, including but not limited to fume hoods, autoclaves, centrifuges, refrigerators, freezers, incubators, etc.

#### **Materials**

Hazardous chemicals, radiological, or biological materials.

#### **Safe or Safety**

Having no exposure to potentially dangerous concentrations of materials.

#### **Vendor**

Commercial service/repair vendors or contractors.

## Laboratory Equipment Release Procedure

Revision No.: 02 Date: 3/4/2021

---

### 5.0 Responsibility

#### Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs

- Ensure that all faculty and principal investigators receive a copy of this procedure, are instructed that it is necessary to comply with the terms of this procedure, and that this procedure is followed.

#### Faculty and Principal Investigators

- Ensure that all laboratory personnel have access to a copy of this procedure, that the procedure is followed, and that any questions or problems are referred to Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) for discussion and resolution.
- Provide a copy of this policy to commercial service vendors.

#### Laboratory Staff and Students

- Follow this procedure and refer any problems or questions to their supervisor.

#### Environment, Health & Safety

- Provide consultative support and assist in managing questions or problems.
- Authorize any necessary deviations from this procedure.
- Review and update this procedure as necessary every two years, or as changes are required.

#### University Facilities Operations

- Refrain from servicing or coming in contact with equipment that has not been cleared as outlined in this procedure.
- Provide a copy of this procedure to any commercial service vendors.

### 6.0 Procedures:

Complete the *Laboratory Equipment Release Checklist*.

#### Material Removal

In general, before servicing, all hazardous chemical, radiological, or bio-hazardous materials must be removed from equipment and stored or disposed of in accordance with established procedures. However, materials may remain within equipment if there will be no direct contact with the materials in the course of servicing the equipment. For example, materials may remain within a refrigerator or freezer while it is being serviced as long as service providers need not work inside the refrigerator, the materials are isolated inside the refrigerator to prevent contact, and there is no dripping or leakage from the interior. This presumes that there is no need to tip or invert the equipment.

When releasing equipment to unrestricted use, all hazardous chemical, radiological, or bio-hazardous materials must be removed from equipment and stored or disposed of in accordance with established procedures.

## Laboratory Equipment Release Procedure

Revision No.: 02 Date: 3/4/2021

---

### Decontamination

In general, all hazardous chemicals, radiological, or bio-hazardous materials must be removed from equipment surfaces (both internal and external) before the equipment is serviced or released to unrestricted use. However, as outlined in Material Removal above, it may be appropriate to only partially decontaminate the equipment in consideration of the nature of the service to be performed, and which surfaces workers are expected to come in contact with.

It is strongly recommended that service workers and lab personnel discuss the proposed service in advance to mutually determine the required level of decontamination.

Decontamination will be performed as outlined herein.

### Radiological Materials

Radioactive contamination will be removed by standard radiological decontamination methods. The maximum level of residual radioactivity will be determined by EH&S policy or by Chapter I, Part 16 of the State Sanitary Code, whichever is more limiting. Surveys will be performed to demonstrate that the decontamination limit has been achieved. These surveys will be documented, and records will be available for inspection by EH&S or by the Department of Health. All waste generated in the course of decontamination will be disposed of as radioactive waste. After decontamination, radioactive labels and stickers will be removed, defaced, or temporarily covered.

### Chemical Residues

Chemical residues will be removed, neutralized, or otherwise rendered non-hazardous using an appropriate method determined by the chemical and physical characteristics of the contaminant(s), and the physical nature of the equipment. Hazard labels will be removed, defaced, or temporarily covered as appropriate. The decontamination method will be documented, and records will be available for inspection by EH&S. Any incidental wastes will be disposed of properly.

### Bio-hazardous Contaminants

Bio-hazardous contaminants will be removed or rendered non-pathological. Typically, this will be accomplished using a bleach solution, other chemical means, and or by steam sterilization. Hazard labels will be removed, defaced, or temporarily covered as appropriate. The decontamination method will be documented, and records will be available for inspection by EH&S. Any incidental wastes will be disposed of properly.

If decontamination cannot be achieved, it may be appropriate to cover contaminated surfaces with impermeable materials, such as polyethylene sheet. If this is done, any contamination, which has been temporarily covered over, must be clearly labeled and explained to service personnel. The covered material will be disposed of as appropriate for the contaminant hazard.

### Certification and Labeling

Once materials removal and decontamination have been completed, the principal investigator (or other authorized individual as designated in writing), will affix a copy of the "Laboratory Equipment Release Certification" form to the equipment. All sections of the form shall be completed with the relevant information as appropriate. A copy of the form will be retained, and will be available for inspection by EH&S.

## *Laboratory Equipment Release Procedure*

Revision No.: 02    Date: 3/4/2021

---

### **Equipment Service or Release**

Once the equipment release/certification form has been affixed to the equipment it may be serviced or released to unrestricted use. University Facilities Operations will not service or pickup for disposal any equipment, which has not been tagged. Laboratory personnel should be readily available to answer questions, and should explain any special considerations to service personnel.

### **Special Problems**

All special or unusual problems will be referred to EH&S for resolution. Any deviation from the requirements of this procedure must be approved in writing by EH&S.

## **7.0 Contact Information:**

University Facilities  
Environment, Health & Safety  
220 Winspear Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14215  
Phone: 716-829-3301  
Fax: 716-829-2704

## **8.0 Associated Documents:**

### UNIVERSITY DOCUMENTS:

- Hazardous Chemical Wastes
- Hazardous Waste Management Guidebook
- Radiation Safety

### FORMS:

- Laboratory Equipment Release Checklist
- Laboratory Equipment Release Certification Form

### RELATED:

- New York State Sanitary Code, Part 16 - Ionizing Radiation

## **9.0 Revisions**

3/4/2021: Clarified in sections 1, 3 & 6 that all equipment, not just potentially exposed equipment must be checked for contamination before released for servicing, recycling or unrestricted use.